

# **Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) COVID-19 Pandemic Student Survey: *An Overview of the Results Across the Nine Participating CCCs***



Prepared for the Council of Presidents CEOs and COVID-19  
CCC Crisis Management Team

Tuesday June 30, 2020



# Survey Objectives & Approach

## Objectives:

- *Gauge perceptions of the Spring 2020 transition to online;*
  - *Gain insight into students' general comfort level with returning to in-person instruction in the fall;*
  - *Determine how students would feel about –*
    - > staggered schedules;*
    - > keeping class sizes small,*
    - > wearing PPE during classes;*
    - > their receptivity to returning to all online classes, if necessary; and,*
    - > what would make an online experience more beneficial.*
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# Survey Objectives & Approach

Target Population: *All Spring 2020 credit students from the following –*

Participating Campuses	
Asnuntuck	Northwestern CT
Gateway	Norwalk
Housatonic	Quinebaug Valley
Middlesex	Tunxis
Naugatuck Valley	

Manchester, Capital and Three Rivers had recently conducted similar surveys, so they opted out.



# Survey Objectives & Approach

## Data Collection Method:

- *Web-based questionnaire disseminated by each campus via email, and in some cases social media as well*

## Field Period:

- *May 31 through June 16*

**Total Responses:** 2,555

**Response Rate:** *Approximately 8.5% across the nine campuses*

**Margin of Error:** *+/- 2.0% (95% Confidence Interval)*

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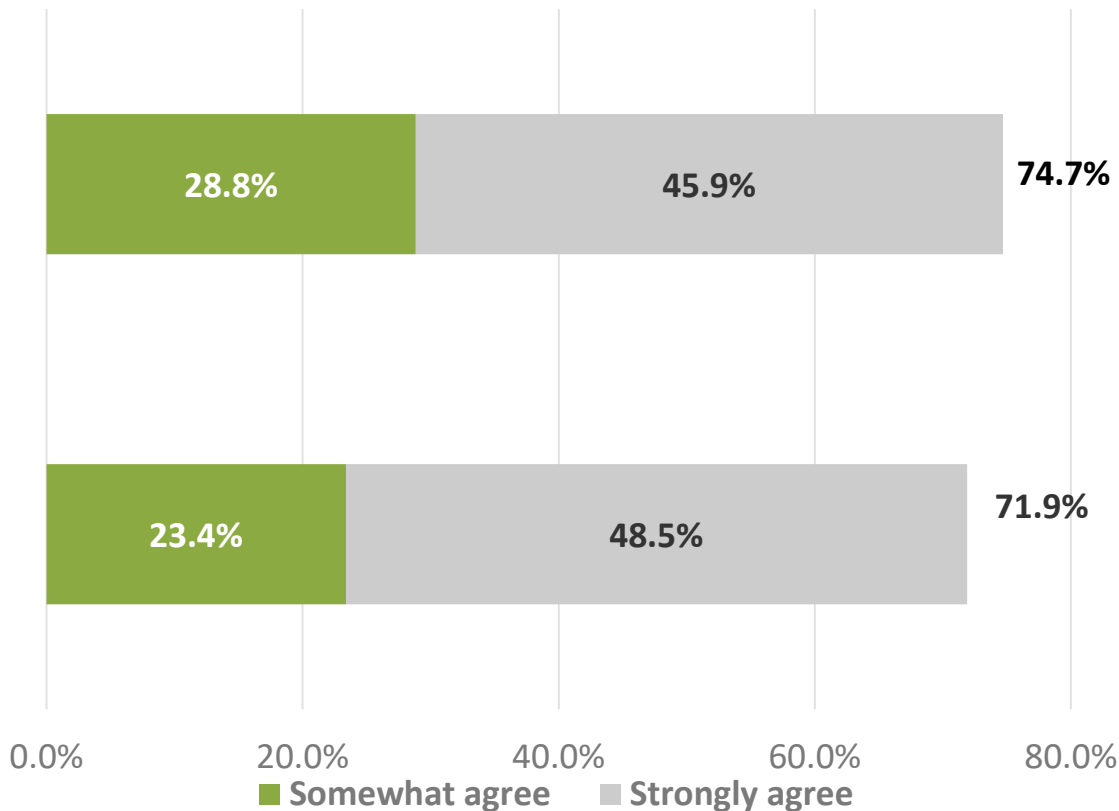
# Executive Summary

- A majority of Spring 2020 students agreed:
  - They knew where to find up-to-date info about institution's policies during COVID-19 Pandemic (74.7%).
  - They had access to the tools & resources I needed to finish the semester's coursework (71.9%).
  - Their institution provided them with enough information to make the transition to online courses (69.9%).
- A similar proportion were somewhat or very satisfied with their institution's response to the transition to online instruction during the Spring 2020 semester (73.1%).
- However, a substantial minority of students felt there were a number of opportunities for improvement that the community colleges should attend to prior to moving to online instruction again.

# Q1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement when thinking about the Spring 2020 semester?

Answered: 2,552 Skipped: 3

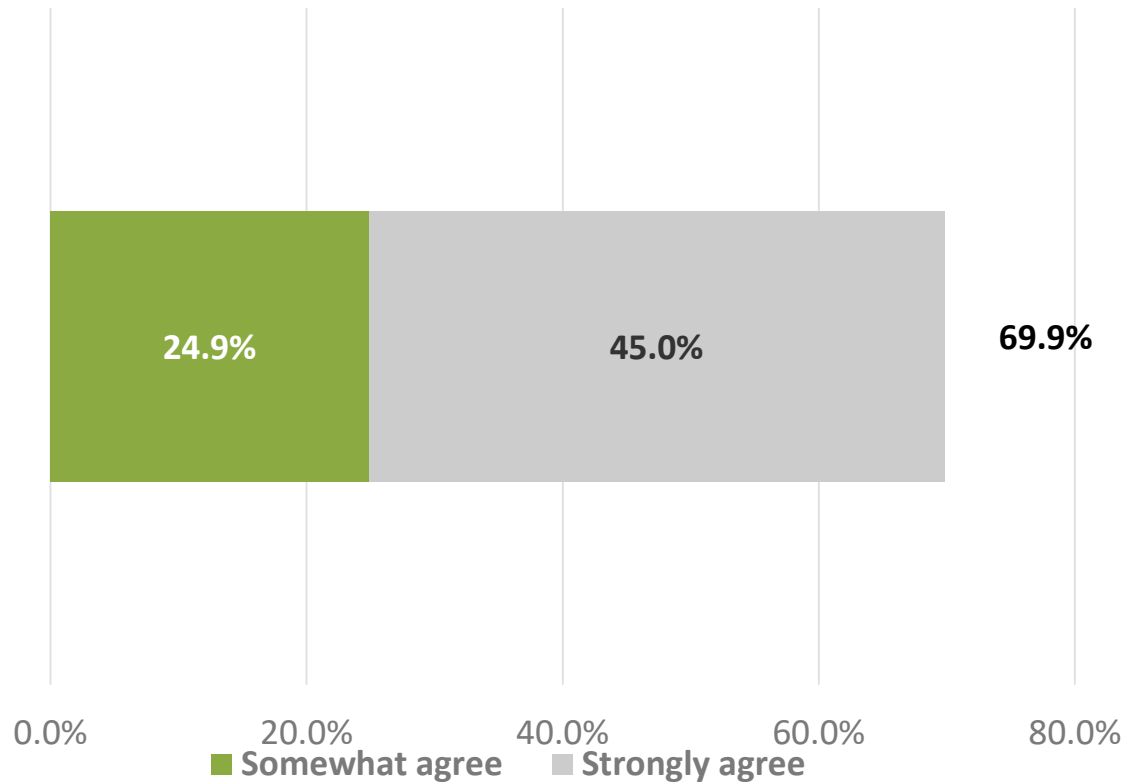
I knew where to find up-to-date info about institution's policies during COVID-19 Pandemic.



# Q1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement when thinking about the Spring 2020 semester?

Answered: 2,552 Skipped: 3

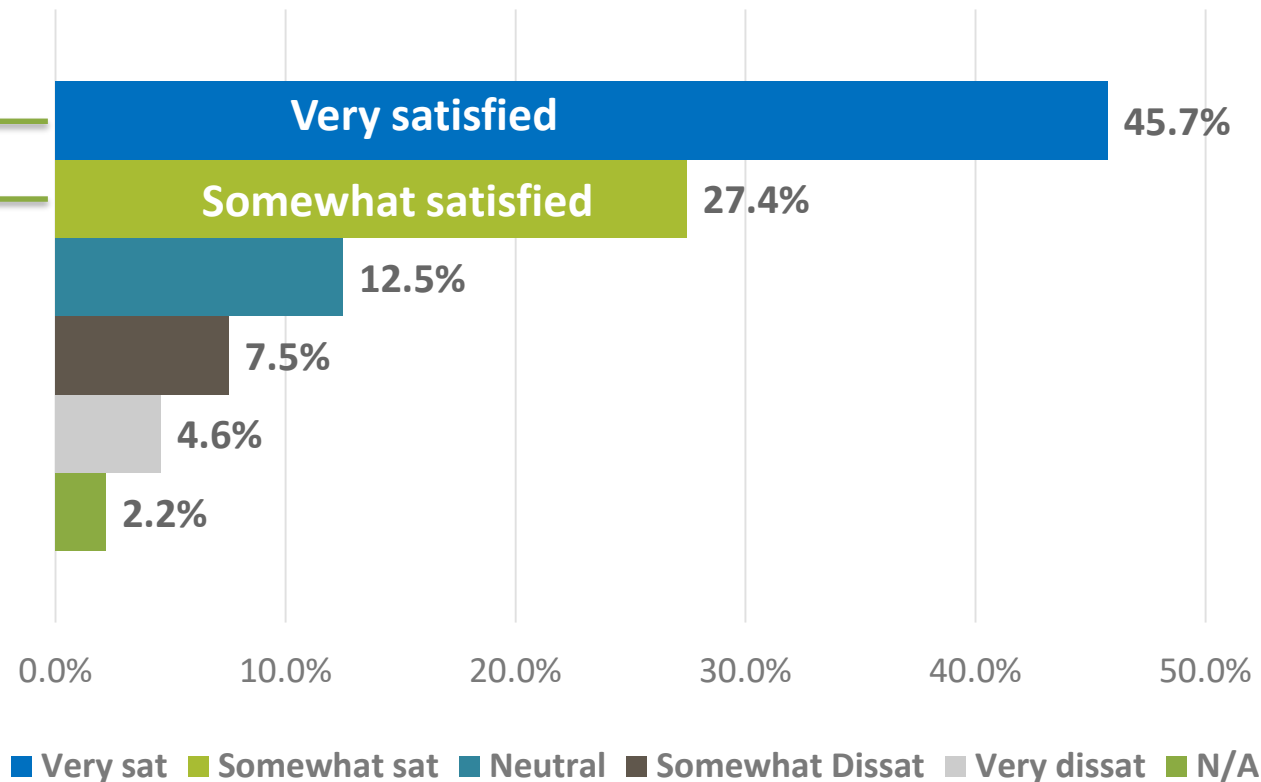
My institution provided me with enough information to make the transition to online courses.



## Q2: Overall, how satisfied were you with your institution's response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the Spring 2020 semester?

Answered: 2,547 Skipped: 8

Slightly over 7 in 10 (73.1%) are either somewhat or very satisfied with their institution's response to the pandemic during Spring 2020.



**Q3. Please share your thoughts on what your institution did well in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, or where improvement is needed. (*open-ended*)**

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However given their Spring 2020 experience, a substantial minority of students felt there were a number of opportunities for improvement that the community colleges should attend to prior to moving to online instruction again. Some major themes emerged from their commentary:

- Not all professors were adequately prepared for this mode of instruction
- Perceptions of effective communications varied considerably
- Labs were frustrating for many
- Mixed feelings about grading policy
- Perceptions of increased class work load
- Comments about library access
- Comments regarding Nursing programs

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**SEE APPENDIX B FOR DETAILED EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS**

## Q4: Do you have access to a stable internet connection at home?

Answered: 2,535 Skipped: 20

An  
overwhelming  
majority have  
stable internet  
access.

Yes

92.3%

No

7.7%

0.0%

20.0%

40.0%

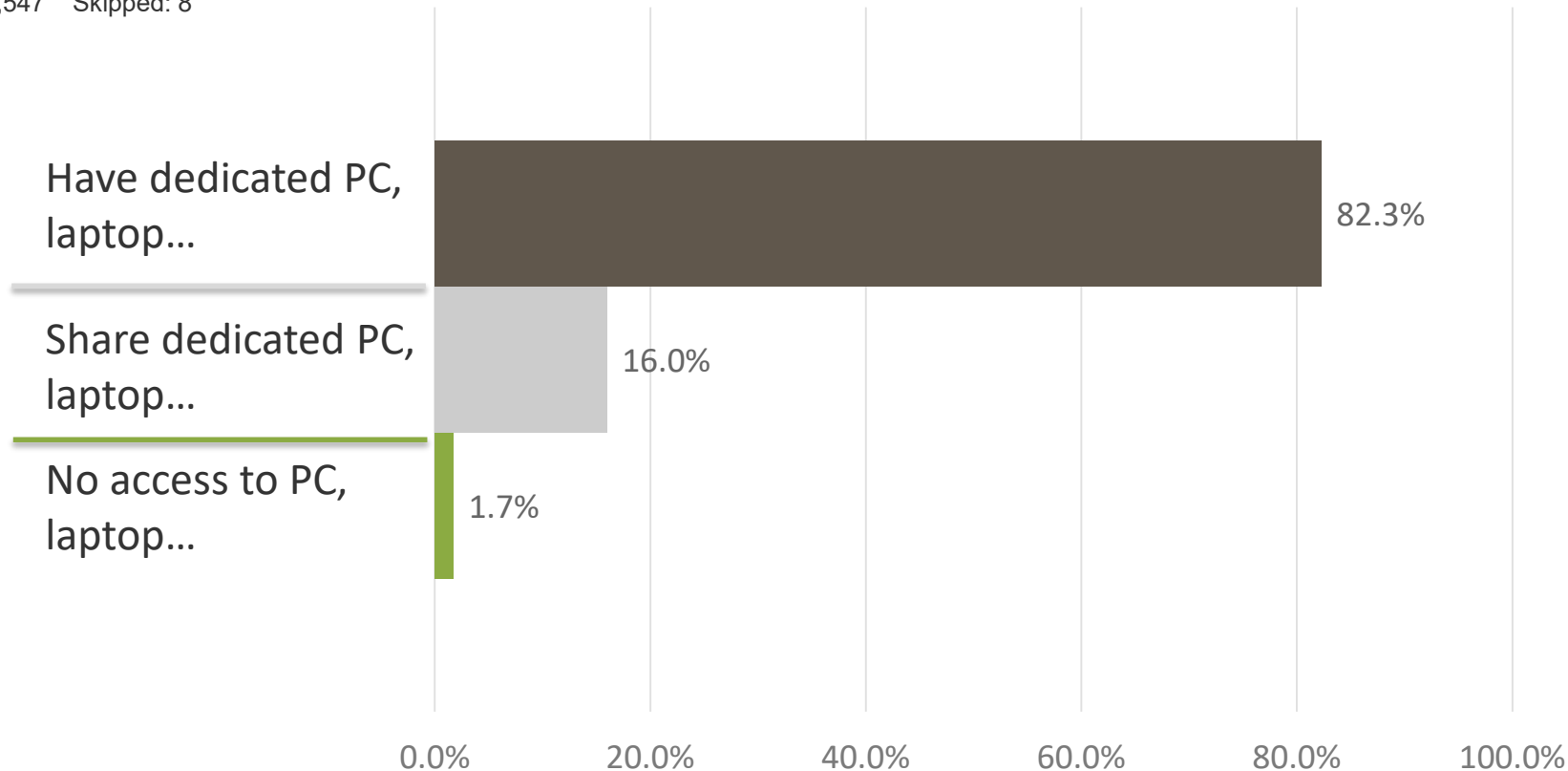
60.0%

80.0%

100.0%

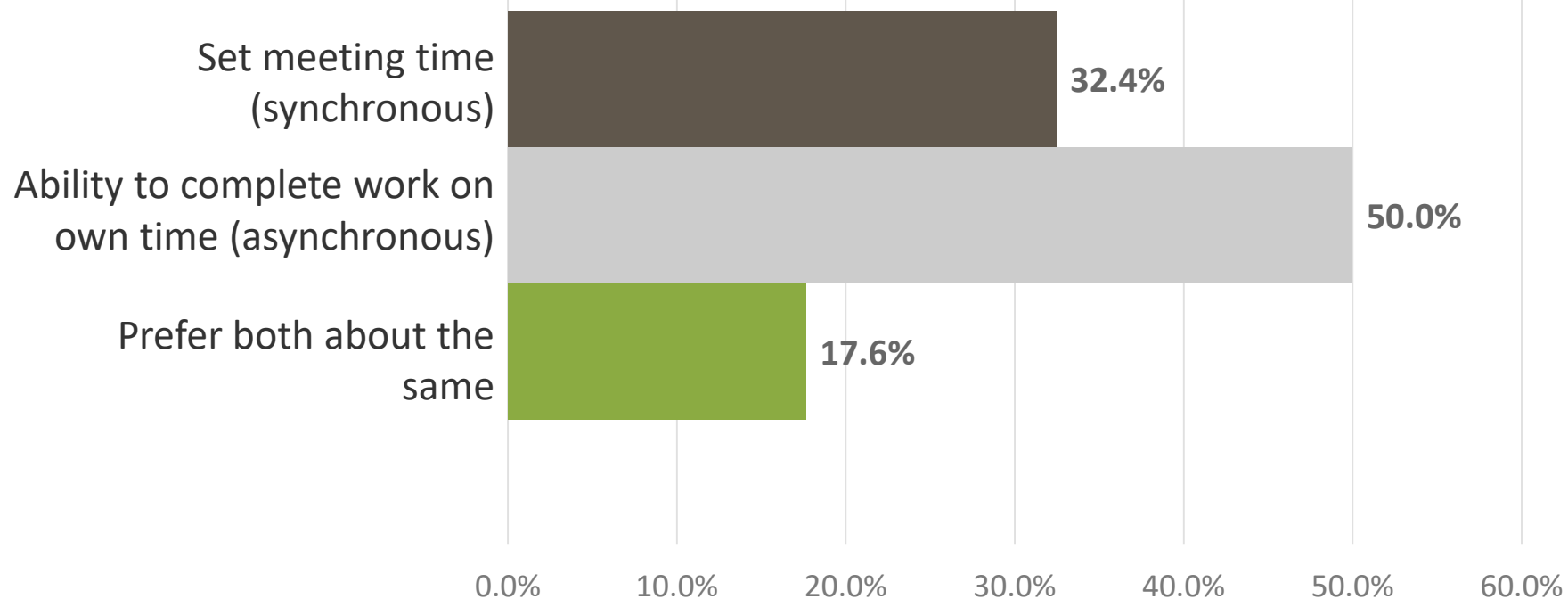
## Q5: Which of the following best describes your access to computer resources at home?

Answered: 2,547 Skipped: 8



# Q7: When it comes to online classes, do you prefer a set meeting time for a class (synchronous), or classes that let you complete your work on your own time (asynchronous)?

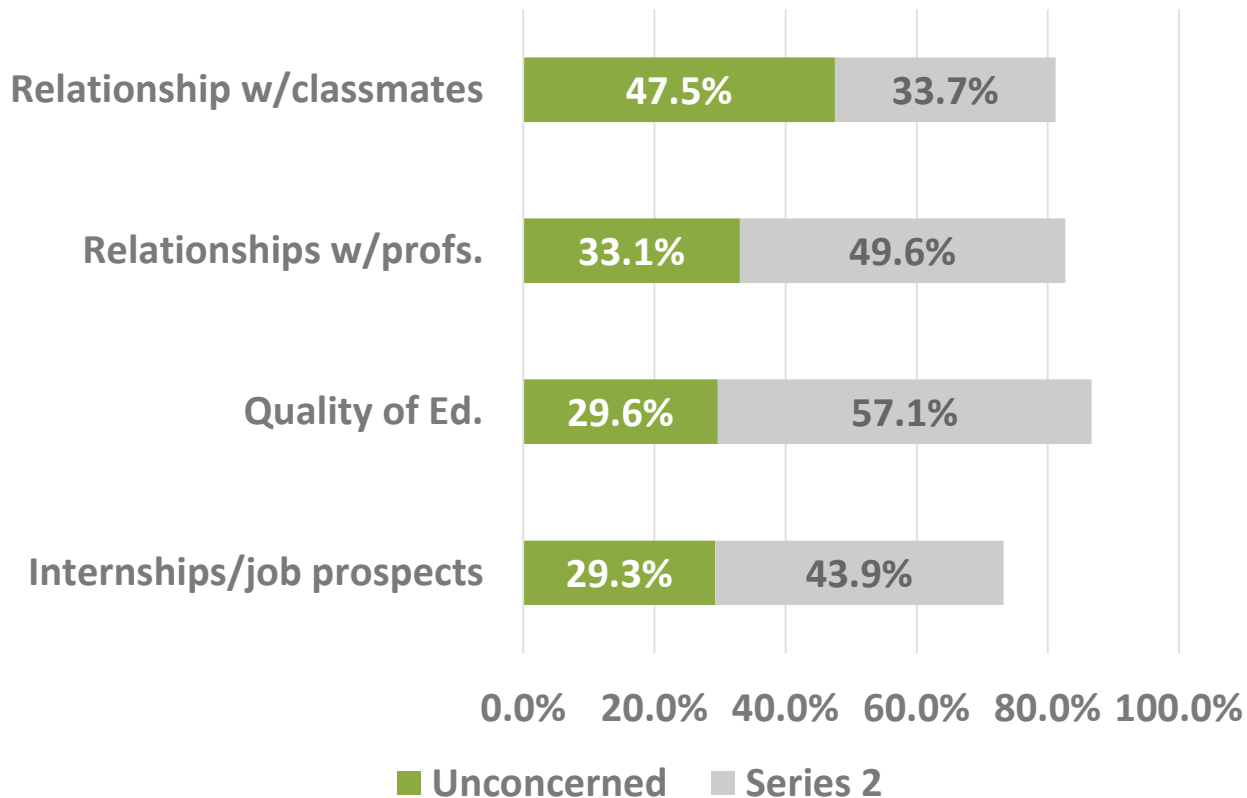
Answered: 2,548 Skipped: 7



## Q6: If online learning were to continue into the Fall semester, how concerned would you be about...? (Somewhat/Very combined)

Answered: 2,552 Skipped: 3

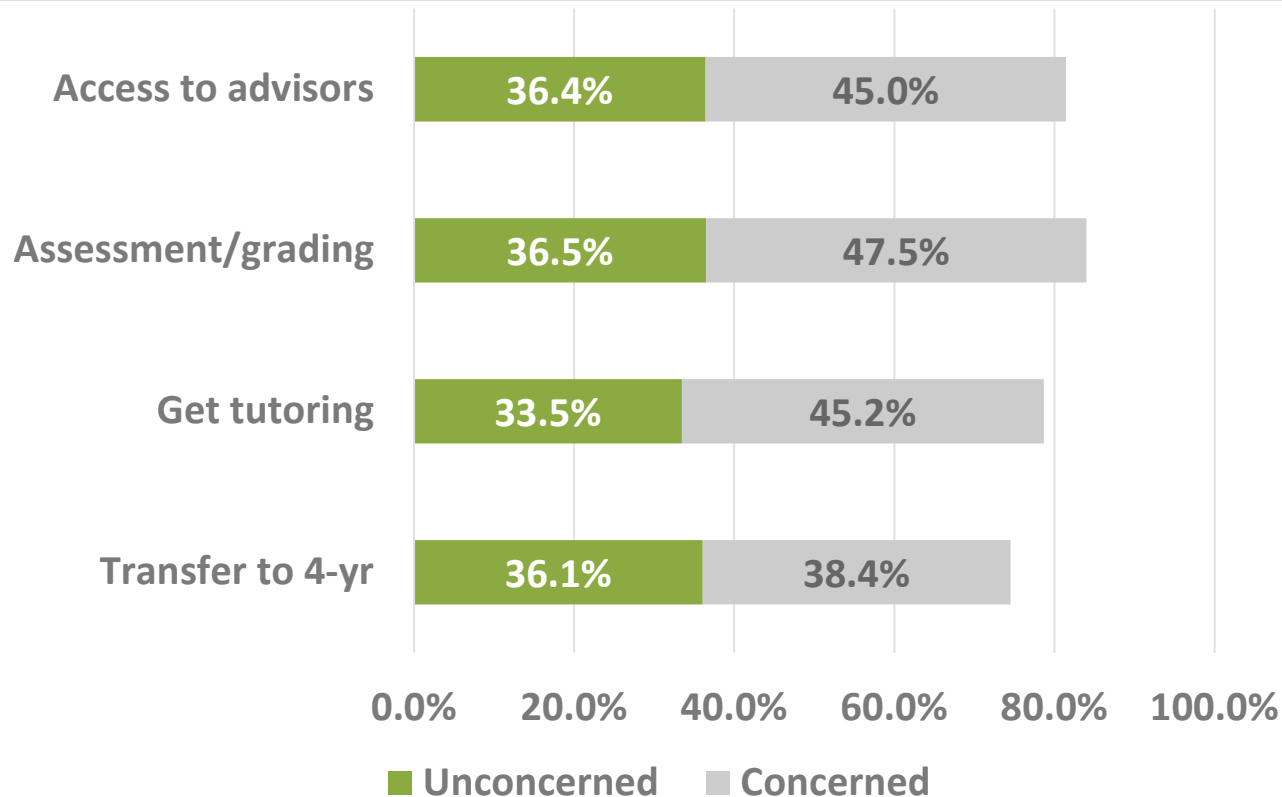
**Major concerns about an online fall surround, first and foremost, the potential erosion of the quality of education, their relationships with professors...**



## Q6: If online learning were to continue into the Fall semester, how concerned would you be about...? (Somewhat/Very combined)

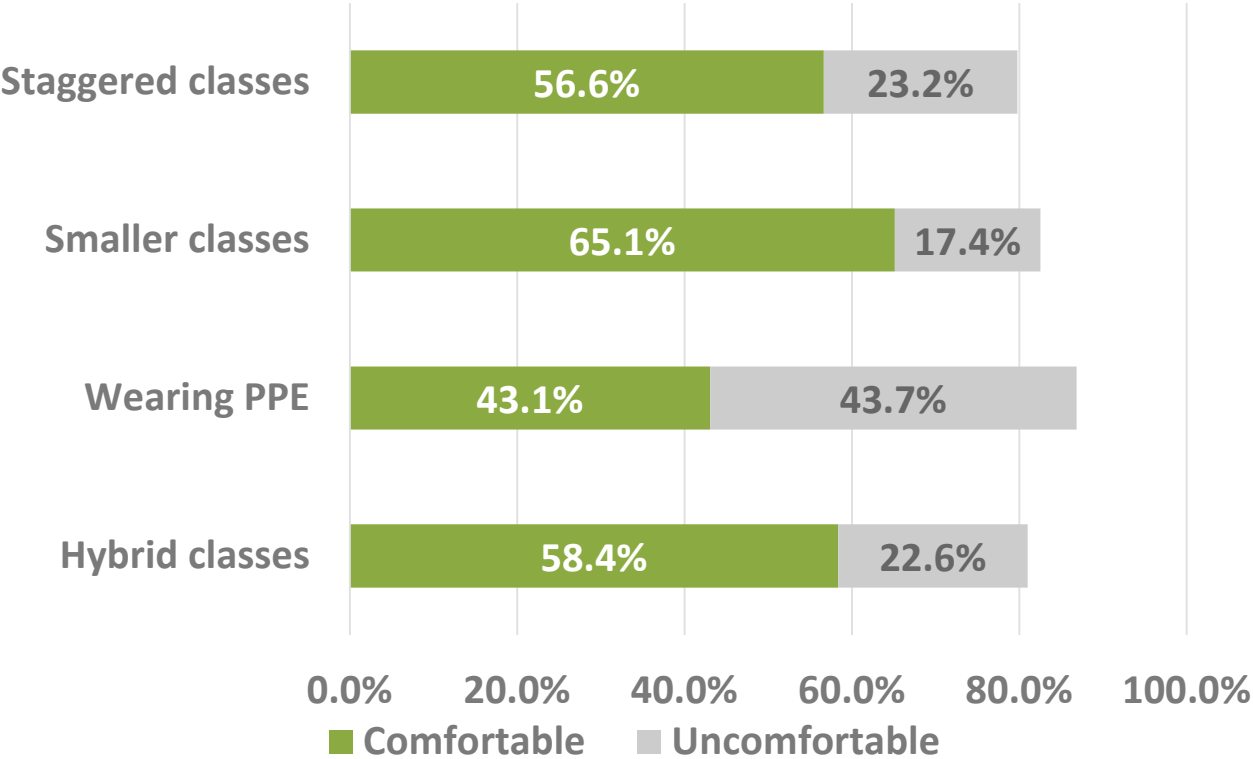
Answered: 2,552 Skipped: 3

...followed by  
assessment and  
grading.



# Q8: If normal operations resume with in-person classes for Fall 2020, how comfortable are you with each of the following...? (Somewhat/Very combined)

Answered: 2,553   Skipped: 2



## Q9: What are your plans for Fall 2020? (Choose the response that most closely matches your future plans):

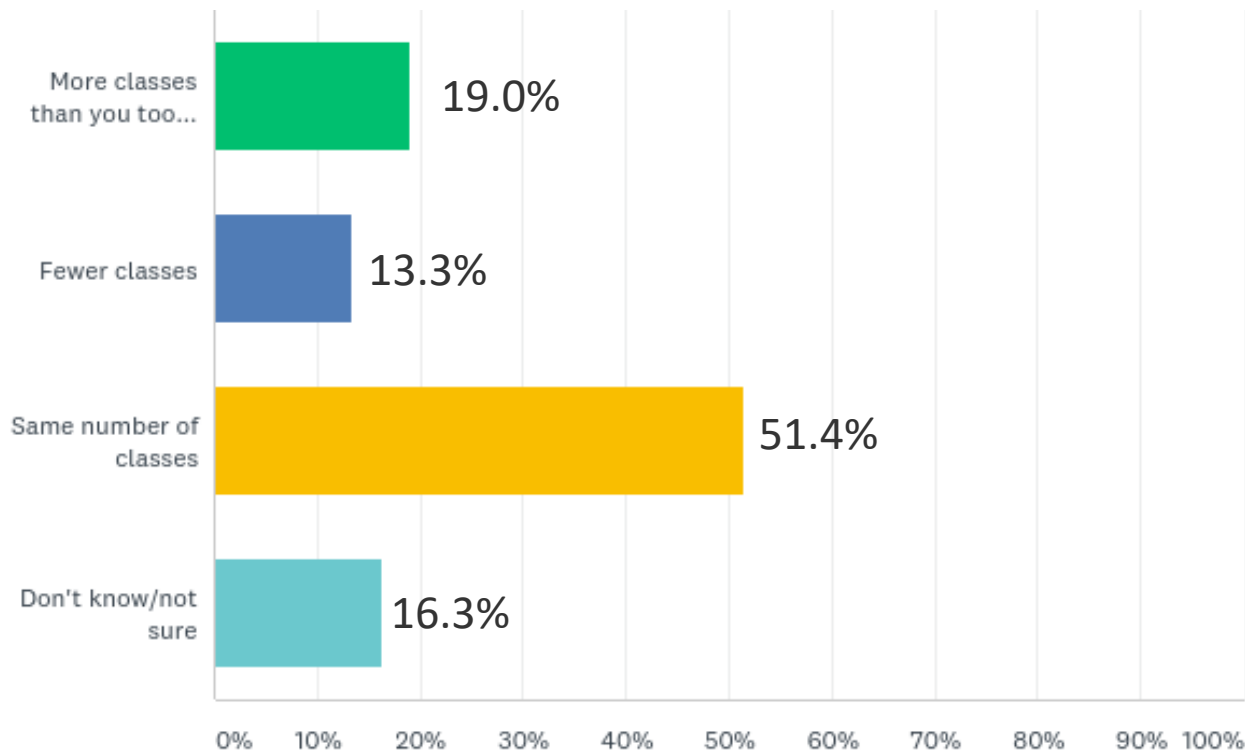
Answered: 2,545 Skipped: 10

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
If normal operation resume, I prefer to enroll and attend in-person classes for Fall 2020.	54.07%	1,376
If normal operations resume, I prefer to engage in remote instruction.	29.78%	758
I will defer my enrollment for one semester or longer	2.32%	59
I will not enroll for Fall 2020, and I do not intend to return to this institution	0.55%	14
I plan to enroll at a different institution next fall.	2.00%	51
I received my degree/certificate at the completion of the Spring 2020 semester.	3.81%	97
Other (please specify)	7.47%	190
TOTAL	2,545	

## Q10: If you plan to return, do you plan to take... ?

Answered: 2,532 Skipped: 23

About one in two (51.4%) plan to take the same course load as they did in the spring. While one in five (19%) say they will take a heavier load.



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# Thank you!

## Questions?

A web-based dashboard of these findings is available by clicking the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-C83XRYJ37/>

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# **Appendix A – Detailed Response Distributions**

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# Q1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement when thinking about the Spring 2020 semester?

Answered: 2,552 Skipped: 3

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
I knew where to find the most up-to-date information about my institution's policies during the COVID-19 pandemic.	45.85% 1,167	28.84% 734	13.56% 345	6.17% 157	4.05% 103	1.53% 39	2,545	1.92
I had access to the tools and resources I needed to complete my Spring 2020 coursework.	48.51% 1,236	23.39% 596	10.64% 271	8.20% 209	6.51% 166	2.75% 70	2,548	1.98
My institution provided me with enough information to make the transition to online courses.	44.98% 1,147	24.86% 634	12.35% 315	8.63% 220	5.73% 146	3.45% 88	2,550	2.02

## Q2: Overall, how satisfied were you with your institution's response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the Spring 2020 semester?

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Answered: 2,547   Skipped: 8

	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	45.74% 1,165	27.44% 699	12.49% 318	7.54% 192	4.59% 117	2.20% 56	2,547	1.96

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# Q4: Do you have access to a stable internet connection at home?

Answered: 2,535    Skipped: 20

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	92.27%	2,339
No	7.73%	196
TOTAL		2,535

# Q5: Which of the following best describes your access to computer resources at home?

Answered: 2,547    Skipped: 8

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I have a dedicated PC, laptop or other useable device.	82.29%	2,096
I have to share a PC, laptop or other useable device.	15.98%	407
I have no access to a PC, laptop or other useable device.	1.73%	44
TOTAL		2,547

**Q7: When it comes to online classes, do you prefer a set meeting time for a class (synchronous), or classes that let you complete your work on your own time (asynchronous)?**

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Answered: 2,548   Skipped: 7

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Set meeting time (synchronous)	17.62%	449
Ability to complete work on own time (asynchronous)	49.96%	1,273
Prefer both about the same	32.42%	826
TOTAL		2,548

## Q6: If online learning were to continue into the Fall semester, how concerned would you be about...?

Answered: 2,552 Skipped: 3

	NOT AT ALL CONCERNED	SOMEWHAT UNCONCERNED	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT CONCERNED	VERY CONCERNED	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Relationships with classmates/friend	40.12% 1,023	7.41% 189	16.94% 432	17.29% 441	16.43% 419	1.80% 46	2,550	2.62
Relationships with professors	24.18% 616	8.87% 226	16.21% 413	26.77% 682	22.88% 583	1.10% 28	2,548	3.15
Quality of education	21.87% 557	7.77% 198	12.64% 322	23.32% 594	33.73% 859	0.67% 17	2,547	3.40
Internships and job prospects	22.93% 584	6.36% 162	18.22% 464	17.28% 440	26.66% 679	8.56% 218	2,547	3.20
Access to advisors	26.66% 679	9.78% 249	16.80% 428	22.14% 564	22.85% 582	1.77% 45	2,547	3.05
Assessment/grading	27.49% 698	9.02% 229	15.16% 385	22.65% 575	24.85% 631	0.83% 21	2,539	3.08
Opportunities to get tutoring	24.08% 613	9.43% 240	17.60% 448	19.99% 509	25.22% 642	3.69% 94	2,546	3.13
Ability to transfer to a 4-year institution in the future	28.23% 719	7.85% 200	17.59% 448	15.90% 405	22.54% 574	7.89% 201	2,547	2.96

## Q8: If normal operations resume with in-person classes for Fall 2020, how comfortable are you with each of the following...?

Answered: 2,553 Skipped: 2

	VERY COMFORTABLE	SOMEWHAT COMFORTABLE	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE	VERY UNCOMFORTABLE	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Staggered class schedules to minimize hallway traffic	33.91% 864	22.72% 579	18.80% 479	11.77% 300	11.38% 290	1.41% 36	2,548	2.43
Smaller classes to enable social distancing	42.99% 1,095	22.14% 564	16.18% 412	8.24% 210	9.15% 233	1.30% 33	2,547	2.17
Wearing PPE (i.e., face masks) during classes	26.05% 664	17.03% 434	12.48% 318	16.12% 411	27.62% 704	0.71% 18	2,549	3.02
Hybrid classes that combine in-person and online instruction	34.22% 873	24.15% 616	17.84% 455	10.98% 280	11.64% 297	1.18% 30	2,551	2.41

## Q9: What are your plans for Fall 2020? (Choose the response that most closely matches your future plans):

Answered: 2,545 Skipped: 10

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
If normal operation resume, I prefer to enroll and attend in-person classes for Fall 2020.	54.07%	1,376
If normal operations resume, I prefer to engage in remote instruction.	29.78%	758
I will defer my enrollment for one semester or longer	2.32%	59
I will not enroll for Fall 2020, and I do not intend to return to this institution	0.55%	14
I plan to enroll at a different institution next fall.	2.00%	51
I received my degree/certificate at the completion of the Spring 2020 semester.	3.81%	97
Other (please specify)	7.47%	190
TOTAL		2,545

## Q10: If you plan to return, do you plan to take... ?

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Answered: 2,532   Skipped: 23

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More classes than you took in Spring 2020	19.00%	481
Fewer classes	13.31%	337
Same number of classes	51.38%	1,301
Don't know/not sure	16.31%	413
TOTAL		2,532

**Q11: At which institution were you enrolled during Spring 2020? If you were enrolled at more than one listed, please select the institution that you view as your primary one.**

Answered: 2,479 Skipped: 76

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Asnuntuck	4.24%	105
Capital	0.04%	1
Gateway	22.03%	546
Housatonic	13.11%	325
Manchester	0.00%	0
Middlesex	5.28%	131
Naugatuck Valley	27.79%	689
Northwestern CT	5.20%	129
Norwalk	6.66%	165
Quinebaug Valley	4.36%	108
Three Rivers	0.12%	3
Tunxis	11.17%	277
TOTAL		2,479

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**Appendix B – Detailed Examples of Responses to:**  
***Q3. Please share your thoughts on what your institution did well in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, or where improvement is needed. (open-ended)***

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## General positive reactions –

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“I think my institution responded quickly and provided plenty of information.”

“The school was quick to get access to tools for all students while distance learning.”

“Our institution ensured the safety of the students. They closed down the school in order to stop the spread, even if it was not the ideal situation. No one contracted the virus at school, which is great.”

“I think that transitioning to taking classes at home was a good idea because while it was a hard transition, at the same time, it kept all of the students safe during the Covid-19 pandemic.”

“My professors went out of their way to accommodate me when I had trouble with online submissions etc. They were flexible and made themselves available for extra help. I felt a little uncertain how it would work out and it was better than I expected. In fact, I did very well in my courses. I'm thankful for both my professors.”

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## General positive reactions –

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“[I] know my professor was very up to date with all the information. She was the BEST during a time of confusion and panic. Professor XXX made sure we understood all the materials before moving on, she responded to emails almost immediately. She was a lifesaver for most in her class, as some of us was not verse with how online classes work.”

“The transition from being in a classroom to completing the semester online was done seamlessly. As nervous as I was with this change I never felt like I didn’t have the resources there for me.”

“I relied on the school's computer and library to do all my assignments because I didn't have a computer at home. So applied for a scholarship so I can get a laptop. And the school provided one. I greatly appreciated it.”

“I understand why my institution had to move online, but I have a hard time learning online so it was a little difficult. My teachers were wonderful though and they really helped me in my discomfort and made the transition a little more bearable.”

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## General negative reactions –

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“The second half of the semester was a complete crapshoot none of the teachers barely knew how to use WebEx or zoom or whatever and they did the bare minimum to get us through the course it was a complete joke.”

“...you had instructors that you allowed to abandon your students, meanwhile reaping the tuition to pay salaries they didn't earn!!”

“Tutoring and unlimited Web X with Professors would have been helpful.”

## Feeling that not all professors were adequately prepared –

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“All four of my professors attempted to schedule zoom lectures outside of their normal classroom instruction time and conflicting with other courses I was taking. Lectures were abandoned in all courses save one after the second week. In those classes we were left to read the book and complete assignments just the same. If online classes are to become the norm, professors need to hold online lectures. It is incredibly difficult to learn subjects like math and science when you're on your own and cannot get reliable and timely feedback. Please invest more in these classes and make them more than just online courses. Online learning is ineffective for a significant portion of the population. Please make more accommodations for those who struggle with online courses. I'm not asking for professors to be lenient with grades and due dates- there's already too much of that. We need our professors to actively engage with the class and at a minimum make time for the class to meet as a whole and ask questions.”

“I feel as though the transition for some professors was not easy, especially the ones that do not use blackboard usually. It made it a little bit difficult in terms of getting assignment done and the overall learning process.”

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## Feeling that not all professors were adequately prepared –

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“Switching to the online model when they did was nice. The problem ended up being the lack of guidance in professors. Some of my classes transitioned smoothly, others I wouldn't hear from a professor for a month at a time. There needs to be some form of consistency and accountability in an online model, even if it varies department to department.”

“...if online instruction is going to be the only way forward, I expect to see professors held to a higher standard of actually teaching instead of being extremely passive as my XXX professor had been.”

“Making sure all professors are able to use blackboard. Some of my professors did not know how to operate blackboard.”

“...some professors did well and some "gave" up.”

“The shutdown was good but the transition period to online didn't correspond throughout all my classes and took longer in some.”

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## Feeling that not all professors were adequately prepared –

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“none of my teachers responded to my emails, we didn't do zoom, i was constantly struggling and had no help and ended up having to drop my classes.”

“I think the institution did well overall with the transition to online, however, some of the professors seemed to have a difficult time staying organized and being able to utilize the online resources to conduct classes.”

“You failed to monitor instructors and some abandoned their students.”

“Teachers did not adapt well to online teaching.”

“Professors were just as confused and flustered as students. Resources were limited and professors offered little to no help or leeway in the online transition.”

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## Feeling that not all professors were adequately prepared –

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“Poor communication from some of the professors. Could not get in touch with some of them. They would not respond to emails.”

“The teachers were not as responsive as they should have been. This has been an extremely stressful time and I failed an easy class due to lack of time on my end and the teacher not responding to my emails.”

“After classes were suspended because of the pandemic, no online instruction was offered in the course that I was enrolled in.”

“It was what it was. My professor just put up a series of enormous assignments with no teaching, so I dropped my class.”

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## Effective Communications –

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“...getting ahold of the tutors.”

“Communication with Facebook was a great idea.”

“I was able to have a zoom meeting with two advisors prior to registering for the summer and fall semesters, which was extremely helpful. I think improvement can be made in the phone services, I tried to call the registrar's office and it went to voicemail after a few rings, but failed to mention an alternative contact (ie: an email, time frame when calls would be forwarded and answered promptly).”

“...I also found that when it was time for registration for fall 2020, I found it difficult to get into contact with staff to answer questions I had.”

“...need more employees available for phone contact for questions.”

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## Labs were frustrating for many –

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“Lab was hard- I’m a visual person but I did well w class.”

“For the hands on classes and labs. It was hard to take them because we couldn’t be there.”

“I paid out of pocket for a 4 credit lab course and felt I was not provided the same level of education I was being given when we were physically in class. The WebEx platform was plagued with technical issues, including audio difficulties every meeting. I ended up withdrawing from the course. I emailed the Dean to ask for a credit to take another class in the future, but received no response. I already have a degree from XXX and came back because I love the school, but losing \$1000 and being ignored by the Dean has really soured my positive view of the school.

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## Labs were frustrating for many –

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“Considering the fact that I paid for an A&P class which included a lab, a SIGN LANGUAGE class, and a HUMAN CADAVER class, all of which REQUIRE by their very nature in-person attendance for hands-on/visual learning, I think it is laughable and very wrong that any kind of reimbursement of fees or tuition was not given. Easier A’s are no substitute... The quality of the education was DRASTICALLY diminished, for which no one is at fault—however the school should respond accordingly regarding tuition and fees... My human cadaver class was entirely stopped during the shutdown, never to resume again... The stimulus money that was given was a separate matter, and again, not a substitute. The financial response really tells a lot about the school’s priorities.”

“I paid lab full fees for a lab that I did not get to fully use. This is unacceptable and those fees should be partially refunded. It was very difficult to take Anatomy and Physiology 2 online. This course is not designed for online. I do. I blame the instructors (they did their best), but pushing this online negatively impacted my ability to learn and my grade suffered as a result. I could not take part in the pass/fail option as the nursing program requires a grade. While I do believe the staff did the best they could under the circumstances, the Community College system is basically stealing lab fees from those of us who had to watch YouTube videos in lieu of actually participating in lab experiments. Ridiculous.”

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## Mixed feelings about grading policy –

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“I really appreciated the option to convert my grade to pass/fail if needed.”

“I thought the most helpful thing was to have the option of pass/ fail for classes because for me personally online classes where hard to get through.”

“Online testing using outside programs to monitor us feels very intrusive and uncomfortable. Our nursing program used proctorio and it was a nightmare.”

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## Perceptions of increased class work load –

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“Should’ve had thought about the students that were still working and didn’t have time to do all the extra work.”

“Assignments shouldn’t be piled up on student during a stress situation.”

“I think the college did a pretty good job but some professors didn't seem to be lenient or understanding. We were all faced with challenges at any given time but due to the situation I hoped things would taken down a notch. Some of us were dealing with sick loved ones, some may have been sick themselves; our lives were becoming chaotic so the caseloads on top of everything else was difficult to keep up with. I understand it is our responsibility to do the work, but with school and work at home along with kids at home doing school and, in my case, caring for elderly. It was a lot!”

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## Library mentions–

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“Just the part about returning books I never received an email about returning my book. They told me to wait until the college opens just hoping I don't end up getting charged later on.”

“I liked the fact that everything was switched to pass fail, my professors were more than accommodating, I wish the campus didn't close completely, I feel as though the library and labs could have opened with social distancing guidelines in place.”

“NVCC did a great job making sure that students still had access to the on campus resources (library, ACE). I used the library live chat quite a bit and I was extremely satisfied with the help I received. I also feel that the ACE did a nice job with the transition. I loved it that students were still able to "go to the ACE" for help when the campus was closed. One area for improvement would be to make sure every student knows where to find the most updated information about COVID-19. I would have liked weekly updates about what was going on and I feel it was a little bit difficult to find what was happening.”

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## Library mentions–

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“...need library access for course help and research protect with cleaning, all winter some of the hand sanitizers were empty, mentioned this numerous times to the guards near it and nothing was done. some cleaning person was not doing their jobs, too busy talking with other cleaning people and the guards.”

“I emailed the library about a book I have taken out, and received a prompt response that I won't have to return the book until the campus is open. It would be helpful to be able to drop the book off, and not have to come into the building to return it. I have very bad asthma and can't breathe. The Governor stated in his order about masks that if a person has a health issue that prevents them from wearing a mask they do not have to. Your college states i must wear one to return my library books but I can't because I have enough trouble breathing as it is.. you are going against the order. When the new semester starts I cannot wear a mask I may try to put one on in close contact but if you try to force me i will call a lawyer...since the ORDER never forced me to wear one. Thank you.”

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## Nursing mentions–

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“Improvements could be made in the nursing program. The faculty were not as helpful with the transition and with material to cover due to student teaching themselves. A better approach would be to focus in areas the class struggled with to have a better outcome next exam. To take the time to explain to students where and why they are falling short. To not throw surprise questions on the exam due to some students experiencing virtual learning during this emergency pandemic. I also, believe a mandatory check in one on one with a professor for tutoring would have been helpful to. Some students needed help staying on the right track mentally as some were battling covid-19 themselves. The professors lack empathy.”

“The faculty of Nursing were extremely good. Very organized and informative. Only thing is that I really would it like to have to have writing center virtual advising because I need it to do papers and I really needed help to revise my papers.”

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## Nursing mentions–

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“The Nursing 2nd semester professors were always willing to answer questions any time of the day. Information on blackboard was always on time. They did awesome job!

“Instructors had to plan their online delivery in about 10 days, my Chemistry prof did the best he could with what he had. However, a BlackBoard coach could have helped him with using BlackBoard for quizzes and for students to send documents to him. Also, when he needed supplies and a computer, the school said they had one, but he wasn't allowed to go onto campus. Another thing that took a while was finding out if the 4 credits from Chemistry with a virtual lab were transferable credits to 4 year State colleges (even though they were in the same situation). This impacted the students who planned to go on to nursing programs at 4 year schools.”

“Clinicals for nursing could have been improved by having more SIMS and less busy work.”

“I am in the Nursing program and whilst I understand it is difficult to replicate on-site clinical experience in an online format, I felt as though everything we were given to do was ‘busy work’. I really did not learn much at all and felt it a big waste of time and money.”

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